

Through a grassroots effort to improve professional instruction and student learning in math and science, Lynn Clark paved the way for advanced math and science standards in Henderson County Public Schools and mentored a generation of empowered teacher leaders.

Described as “a teacher’s teacher,” Mrs. Clark began teaching for HCPS in 1977 at East Flat Rock Elementary. After two years in HCPS, she taught in the Cherokee Indian Reservation Junior High for seven years. Upon her return to HCPS in 1984, Mrs. Clark quickly established herself as an advocate of teacher professional development, ultimately leading to her position as K-12 Math & Science Director.

Former colleague and current HCPS Director of Elementary Education Shannon Marlowe explains, “The current ideas in education are that children, especially in elementary school, should be immersed in basic number sense activities and given multiple opportunities during the school day to share their reasoning about mathematical concepts, ideas, and understandings.”

However, that wasn’t always the case, and Mrs. Clark was instrumental in educating local teachers on the benefits of allowing students to explore mathematical and scientific ideas, and in supporting teacher instruction through professional development.

Working closely with the N.C. Department of Public Instruction, Meredith College, the Math Leadership Program at Mount Holyoke College in Massachusetts, and the University of Alabama’s Middle School Integrated Science Program, Mrs. Clark provided teachers access to university mathematics educators and authors – and to opportunities that would shape their careers.

Mrs. Clark encouraged her blossoming teacher leaders to participate in Teaching Excellence and Mathematics (TEAM) – a five-year program with collegiate math professors and national mathematical leaders – to further develop their own training workshops for local educators.

Jeane Joyner, director of Meredith Mathematics & Science Institutes at Meredith College, writes, “The level of success of TEAM (Teaching Excellence and Mathematics) members in their districts and as emerging leaders across North Carolina was in direct proportion to the level of support and encouragement by their district administrators. This is where Lynn shined!”

Also through this teacher leader model, HCPS implemented technology grant monies to create a local team of “Weavers,” or K-12 teachers who “wove” technology into their classroom instruction and traded feedback with their peers.

Kelly Schofield, former colleague and current principal of Hanawalt Elementary in Iowa, writes, “She made us all better because of her presence, and the impact has far outlasted her absence.”